

GETTING ENGAGED – COLLABORATING FOR SUCCESS

Communication, Collaboration, Commitment

September 13 – 14, 2019



Ensuring a bright future for every child

MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Amanda Adams, M.S., Family Engagement Transition Coach

Mona Spells Adou, M.S., Parent Engagement/Trainer/Dispute Resolution Specialist

1

Mississippi Department of Education

VISION

To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens

MISSION

To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community



Ensuring a bright future for every child

2

2

State Board of Education Goals FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2016-2020

1. All Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas
2. Every Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career
3. Every Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program
4. Every School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders
5. Every Community Effectively Uses a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes
6. Every School and District is Rated “C” or Higher



3

3

Where Are We Going?

There is a positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and benefits for students, including improved academic achievement. This relationship holds across families of all economic, racial/ethnic, and educational backgrounds and for students at all ages.

Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp



4

4

How Do We Get There?



COMMUNICATION



Communication



7

Start Early

- Take the time to reach out early in the year.
- Make the first interaction a positive one.
- Open the lines of communication early and keep them open.
- Learn about the dynamics of your students' families.

8

Start Early – Remember:


- Impressions are made before the first words are spoken. Social media gets the word out fast – for better or for worse.
- Trust or mistrust begins early in a relationship. Give families a reason to trust you.



9

9

Keep the Lines Open – Be:

- Honest and open – about yourself and your program. Trust is built here.
- An active listener – your body tells what your mouth may not. Smile 
- Understanding and understood – many negative experiences emerge from miscommunication.
- Available. Invest time with families. It will be well worth it in the long run.



10

10

COLLABORATION



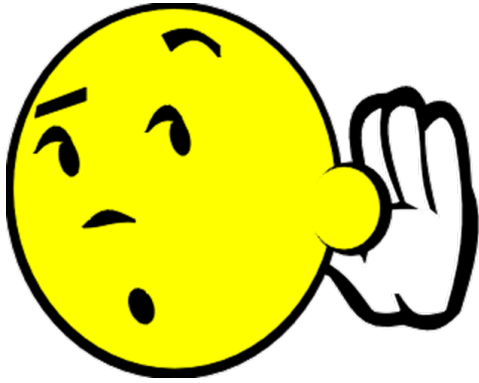
Collaboration

“Recognize, respect and address families’ needs, as well as class and cultural differences. Embrace a philosophy of partnership where power and responsibility are shared.”

A. Henderson

Involvement vs. Engagement

Leading with ears vs. mouth



Involvement vs. Engagement

Balance in relationship

- Both partners must feel valued
- Both partners must contribute



Involvement vs. Engagement

Decision-making – doing to or doing with?



Involvement vs. Engagement

Parent Involvement	Parent Engagement
Conversations led by the schools telling parents what they should be doing	Conversations that include schools listening to parents' ideas about what works best for their child
Communication is one sided with schools sending home sheets of information and automated phone calls	Utilizes two-way conversation such as home visits and personal phone calls
Pre-determined and limited list of ways parents can help	Offers opportunities for parents to come together to identify needs
Focuses on improving what goes on within the four walls of the school	Recognizes that schools must participate as an institution in neighborhood-wide improvement efforts
	Critical to creating a successful learning environment

Collaboration



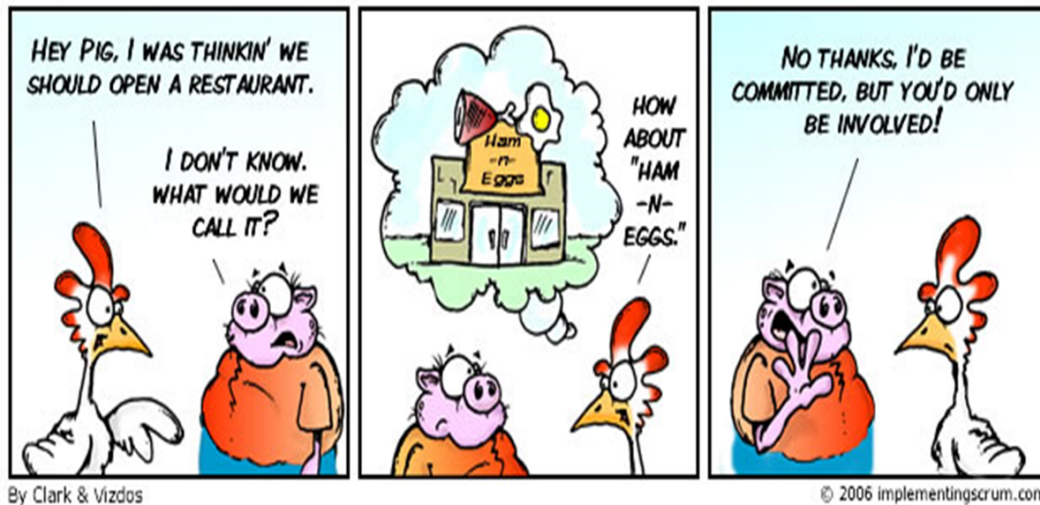
17

COMMITMENT



18

Commitment



Partnership Challenges

Differences in:

- Expectations
- Perspectives
- Opinions
- Communication styles

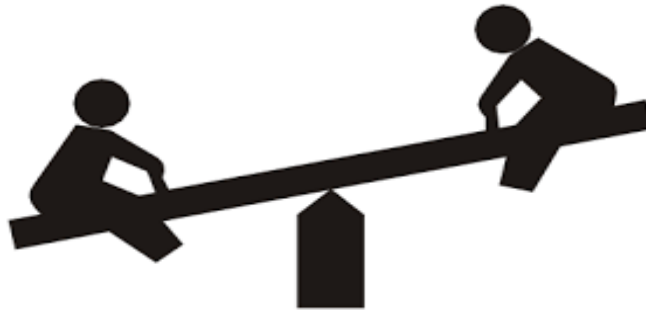


It's ok to be different. If both partners in the relationship were the same, one of you wouldn't be necessary.

Partnership Challenges

Unequal knowledge or power

- School staff know about how things work in schools and in districts, but not necessarily about the child.
- Parents know about their child, but not necessarily about the educational system.



Partnership Challenges

Misunderstanding of roles and responsibilities

- Chain of command - who's in charge here?
- IEP Committee member roles
- Expectations of each partner should be communicated clearly

Partnership Challenges

Positive Problem Solving

- Separate the person from the problem.
- Keep adult issues between adults.
- Try to disagree without being disagreeable.

What Engagement Might Look Like



Commitment



25

Commitment

While the road is long and winding. . .



26

Commitment

Remember that the ultimate goal is positive student outcomes.



27

27



**Mona Spells – mspells@mdek12.org
601.359.3498**

**Amanda Adams – adams@mdek12.org
601.359.3737**

28

28